

of National Defense Jerzy Szmajdzinski of Poland.

Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and President Aleksander Kwasniewski  
*July 17, 2002*

We reaffirm the deep friendship and vibrant alliance between the United States and Poland. We are committed to freedom and democratic values, which form the basis of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. As we begin the 21st Century, all of Europe's peoples, for the first time in history, have an opportunity to live in democracies, at peace with themselves and their neighbors. The United States pays tribute to the people of Poland, who contributed so much to bringing an end to Europe's Cold War division and who led the way to the undivided Europe now taking shape. Today, Poland and the United States are determined to complete our task: to build the Transatlantic House of Freedom, open to all of Europe's peoples and prepared to meet the global challenges of the 21st Century. Both sides stress the paramount importance of strong and vigilant Transatlantic links for a successful response to the new challenges that we face.

We will meet the new challenges together. We must act decisively to win the war against global terror. Polish forces serve alongside United States forces in Operation Enduring Freedom. In November 2001, President Kwasniewski invited leaders from Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe to identify concrete steps to defeat terrorism. The United States appreciates this initiative and welcomes follow-up meetings. Poland and the United States believe that these efforts can contribute significantly to controlling borders, cutting off terrorist financing, stemming the smuggling of individuals and equipment for terrorist purposes, and preventing bioterrorism.

In the face of terrorism and other new threats, NATO's traditional commitment to collective defense must also be carried out in new ways. We are determined to lead NATO's adaptation to meet the new threats we face. NATO must develop improved capabilities and be able to respond, rapidly and flexibly, to threats from wherever they arise. We are determined to provide the resources needed to achieve strengthened capabilities and want to work jointly with other Allies to this end. As NATO adapts, the United States and Poland are transforming their militaries to make them as efficient, mobile, and well-equipped as possible. The United States and Poland have agreed to expand cooperation between our armed services both to deepen our military-to-military relations, and in particular to promote needed transformation in our defense. We hope this enhanced cooperation can be a model for activities with other Allies.

We look forward to welcoming new members to the NATO Alliance. The enlargement of NATO has already extended security on the European continent and will continue. At its Prague Summit, NATO will extend invitations to those European democracies ready to share in the responsibilities of NATO membership, and the United States and Poland have agreed on the desirability of a broad round of enlargement. The states aspiring to join NATO have worked hard to institute reforms, solidify the rule of law, and leave no doubt about the strength of their democratic institutions.

Reforms must continue even after membership, just as Poland has continued its reforms since joining NATO in 1999.

We welcome NATO's new relationship with Russia. The NATO-Russia Council has great potential for NATO members and Russia to build common security against common threats, especially in combating proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism. We also welcome an improved relationship between NATO and Ukraine. The United States and Poland share an interest in encouraging the aspirations of the people of Ukraine to prepare for a future in Europe. We agreed to work together to support Ukraine's efforts to implement needed economic and democratic reforms. Our two nations urge Belarus to join its neighbors in seeking a democratic and free market future.

Accession to the European Union is essential for Poland's future economic growth, and benefits our bilateral relations as well as the trans-Atlantic relationship. The United States and Poland welcome the impending enlargement of the European Union as another signal of the deep roots across the European continent of free market principles and open societies. We seek stronger ties between the European Union and NATO. The prospects for overcoming the most serious challenges of the day are enhanced significantly when NATO and the EU cooperate in achieving common solutions.

The Polish-American economic partnership contributes to Poland's ability to realize its full potential as a future EU member state, and increases employment and high technology growth opportunities in Poland. We believe that Poland's aspirations to play a full role within the EU is fully compatible with its desire to remain a strong Transatlantic partner of the United States. Poland's continued growth and prosperity depend on a welcoming, predictable investment climate, and we have established an Economic/Commercial Dialogue to enhance our trade and investment relationship

and to address specific issues of mutual concern. Commerce Secretary Evans hopes to visit Poland in 2003 as part of our overall effort to enhance our bilateral relations.

We welcome the contribution of the strong Polish-American community to building ties between our nations. For over 200 years the United States has been a home and a land of hope for generations of Poles searching for the American dream of liberty, freedom, justice, and prosperity. Today, their task is not only that of linking our two great democracies, but also one of global dimensions, to which Poles and Americans devote their energy in the name of the common values that Polish Americans have done so much to develop.

The United States and Poland have worked closely and productively, including with Jewish communities in both countries, to promote tolerance. We express satisfaction about the efforts made to preserve memories of the Holocaust and support initiatives to expand education on the history of the Shoah. We renew our commitment to preserve and protect significant cultural heritage of mutual interest, and commend the progress achieved in this area through cooperation between Polish central and local institutions and U.S. public and private institutions.

The friendship between the United States and Poland is strong and enduring. We are united by ties of heritage, family, and faith. Bilateral relations between the United States and Poland are excellent, and we will work to strengthen those ties. Our common interests reinforce our relationship, and we reaffirm today our determination to work more closely as friends and allies in the future.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.